

# ILRI

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INTERNATIONAL  
LIVESTOCK RESEARCH  
INSTITUTE

**Consultancy for the Development and Implementation  
of ILRI's Diversity & Inclusion Program**

## **INCEPTION REPORT**

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## Context and Objectives for D&I Consultancy

The International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) subscribes to the ideals of diversity and inclusion as a core institutional value. ILRI recognizes that investment is required to ensure this value is reflected in its institutional practices and culture. To achieve this, ILRI developed a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2018-2021) that provides a vision, direction and commitment for the institution to enhance a workplace culture that values a diverse workforce and helps build a more inclusive workplace environment.

It is in this context that ILRI contracted the services of an external consultant (Marco Noordeloos) to facilitate the development and implementation of a robust and relevant D&I program. The consultant has 20+ years' experience in CGIAR Centers in different capacities: as a scientist and senior manager, and has 12+ years' experience in organization development with a focus on gender, diversity, and cross-cultural leadership in iNGOs.

The objectives for this assignment are to (a) carry out an assessment of the current status of ILRI's D&I strategy, policies and practices, (b) design a context-based D&I framework that is responsive to the needs of ILRI, and (c) facilitate implementation of the D&I framework.

The timeframe for the consultancy is from 01 December 2019 until 30 September 2020, with the following indicative stages and deliverables:

- Inception phase: 01 December 2019 - 31 January 2020 (22 days)
- Design phase: 01 February – 29 February 2020 (20 days)
- Delivery phase: 01 March – 15 September 2020 (36 days)
- Reporting phase: 16-30 September 2020 (7 days)

This Inception Report provides the findings of the first phase of this consultancy and serves as a foundation for the design of a context-based D&I Program.

## Activities and Findings During Inception Phase

The Inception Phase comprised three main activities, covering the period from 01 December 2019 until 15 February 2020:

- **Desk study of ILRI documents:** Review of documents to understand ILRI's strategy, policies and aspirations for a D&I program. These included: D&I Strategy, ILRI's Core Values, Workplace Discrimination, Bullying, and Sexual Harassment Policy, Whistle Blowing Policy, Staff Code of conduct, and ILRI's website (including job advertisements).
- **Analysis ILRI's HR data:** ILRI's People & Organization Development (P&OD) unit provided various datasets that captured (a) detailed demographics of the current staff population, (b) hiring and exits of staff for the calendar years 2018 and 2019, and (c) other requested numbers and files e.g. related to exit interviews, recruitment practices, and performance appraisal submissions.
- **Interviews with staff:** During this inception phase, I conducted individual and group interviews with a total of 102 staff comprising a cross-section of the organization (see Table 1). The conversations (both in Nairobi and Addis, as well as via Skype) focused on their experiences and views on the organizational culture at ILRI, the interactions with colleagues and (senior) managers, and recommendations for a Diversity and Inclusion program at ILRI.

**Table 1.** List of individual and group interviews conducted at ILRI (Jan-Feb 2020).

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- Director General (Jimmy Smith)
  - Director General's Representative in Ethiopia (Siboniso Moyo)
  - Assistant Director General, Institutional Planning & Partnerships (Shirley Tarawali)
  - DDG, Research and Development - Biosciences (Dieter Schillinger)
  - DDG, Research and Development - Integrated Sciences (Iain Wright)
  - Director, Corporate Services Directorate (Michael Gerba)
  - Director, P&OD (Stella Kiwango)
  - Director, CRP flagship (Tom Randolph)
  - Director, BecA Hub (Jacob Mignouna)
  - Program Leader, Feed and Forage Development (Chris Jones)
  - Program Leader, Animal and Human Health (Vish Nene)
  - Program Leader, Livestock Genetics (Steve Kem)
  - Program Leader, Sustainable Livestock Systems (Polly Ericksen)
  - Program Leader, Policies, Institutions and Livelihoods (Isabelle Baltenweck)
  - Regional representative, East and Southeast Asia (Hung Nguyen)
  - Regional staff, Vietnam (Thanh Nguyen)
  - Head of Administration, Ethiopia (Gail Amare)
  - Head of Internal Audit (Peter Getugi)
  - Manager, People and Organizational Development (Aster Tsige)
  - Scientists, Kenya (6 representatives)
  - Scientists, Ethiopia (4 representatives)
  - Agricultural Economist, Marketing Opportunities (Nadhem Mtimet)
  - Research Associates and Research Officers (8 representatives)
  - Business support staff – Officers and Assistants, Kenya (15 representatives)
  - Business support staff – Managers, Kenya (11 representatives)
  - Business support staff – Officers and Assistants, Ethiopia (7 representatives)
  - Business support staff – Managers, Ethiopia (6 representatives)
  - D&I Taskforce (4 representatives, including one staff in Uganda)
  - People & Organization Development (7 representatives)
  - International staff, Ethiopia (4 representatives)
  - National Staff Council, Kenya (2 representatives)
  - National Staff Council, Ethiopia (2 representatives)
  - Program Administrative Staff, Nairobi (1 representative)
  - Hosted Centers staff, Ethiopia (5 representatives)
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## Findings & Observations

Given the semi-structured nature of the numerous conversations and analysis, the inception phase uncovered a broad range of topics and dynamics related to organizational performance. However, the focus in this report pertains only to those topics directly relevant to D&I. Findings are structured around three main sections: what is working well, what needs more attention, and recommendations for the design phase.

### What is working well at ILRI in terms of D&I?

- *Organizational culture and leadership that genuinely support Diversity & Inclusion*
- *Encouraging numbers in terms of staff diversity and recruitment*
- *Broad buy-in across the organization that D&I is important to ILRI's success*
- *Solid policy building blocks in place for D&I program*

### Organizational culture and leadership that genuinely support Diversity & Inclusion

ILRI is an impressively friendly workplace where people coming from different backgrounds treat each other with respect. The organization works hard to welcome and accommodate diverse staff and offers great campuses that provide conducive work environments and good recreational and child-support facilities. It is obvious that ILRI is doing a lot of things right, also in terms of D&I. Even when people do raise issues, most employees state that ILRI is one of the best organizations they've ever worked for.

There is widespread recognition for the effective push and role modelling by the Director General for a more respectful, diverse and inclusive work environment. Numerous interviewees mentioned the accessibility of the DG and other senior leaders, the town hall conversations, and visible role modelling and promoting a D&I agenda at coffee mornings and other staff events. As a result, the relationship between staff and top leadership is widely seen as much improved under current leadership, with people being more open and senior management providing more of a listening ear.

Also in terms of advancing the gender-agenda, ILRI benefits from strong leadership commitment to hiring women, e.g. with the IMC playing an active role in requiring proof that gender has been adequately addressed in hiring process. Also, full gender parity in Board sends positive signal of leadership buy-in to advancing D&I as an institutional priority.

### Encouraging numbers in terms of staff diversity and recruitment

As of January 2020, ILRI employs 645 staff from 38 nationalities who conduct operations at office locations in 18 countries. Some 96% of staff are based in Africa, with the Kenya (59%) and Ethiopia (35%) campuses housing a combined 94% of the ILRI staff population. Overall, women make up 38% of the workforce, while 91% of all staff are nationals from developing countries.

Aggregating data by gender AND diversity across seniority levels at ILRI reveals two particularly positive points: (1) ILRI's Board is highly balanced both in terms of gender and developed vs. developing country nationals, and (2) more than half (54%) of senior level staff at ILRI are nationals from developing countries.

Quantitative analysis of 2018-2019 data suggests annual staff turnover at very reasonable levels (13% for international staff, 11% for national staff), with no indication of a gender bias. In addition, the continued application of a gender-push by the management committee (IMC) in recruitment approvals (see above), is providing real impetus towards ILRI's ambition for full-gender parity at all staff levels. For illustration, 63% of the international-level positions recruited between early 2018 and late 2019, were filled by women.

### Broad buy-in across the organization that D&I is important to ILRI's success

Most staff seem to understand that advancing a D&I agenda is not merely a “nice” or “politically-correct” thing to do. Women play a central role in livestock development and nonprofit organizations today are feeling increasing pressure to innovate and demonstrate impact and relevance to stakeholders and beneficiaries. It is therefore mission-critical for an organization like ILRI to create and sustain an inclusive workplace that allows an appropriately representative diversity of staff to effectively contribute their best to address large-scale agricultural, environmental and socio-economic challenges. Existing staff awareness will be an advantage during the roll out of the D&I program, particularly when engaging managers around their roles and responsibilities in terms of creating an inclusive work environment and role modeling the behaviors that the D&I policy aspires.

### Solid policy building blocks in place for D&I program

ILRI already has a number of well-developed D&I-related policies and practices in place that form a ready foundation for our work ahead. These include:

- ILRI's **Diversity and Inclusion Strategy** aims to provide vision, direction and a commitment to enhance a workplace culture that values a diverse workforce and an inclusive workplace environment. In my view, the current document offers a good foundation for a focused D&I program, including a business case for D&I, guiding principles, and importantly: the specific roles and responsibilities laid out for the institute's leadership, P&OD, supervisors, and staff.
- As part of its mission and vision statement, ILRI refers to its **core values** as the 3Rs: Respect, Responsible, and Responsive. The concept of 3Rs (at least superficially) are already well-known by staff in the organization and provide valuable anchors for a Diversity & Inclusion program (as also stated in the D&I strategy).
- Revised in 2018, ILRI's **Workplace Discrimination, Bullying, and Sexual Harassment Policy** aims to sensitize staff and stakeholders on inappropriate behaviours related to discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment. This is a very good and important document that provides clear behaviour definitions as well as the mechanisms for addressing unacceptable workplace behaviours (reporting, investigations, penalties) and employees' rights and assistance.
- ILRI's **Whistle Blowing Policy** stipulates the communication channel (and email address) for reporting concerns or complaints regarding conduct by Board members, Directors, Managers or other staff, e.g. related to discrimination, abuse of power, or (sexual) harassment.

- Each new employee is required to sign a **Staff Code of Conduct** to confirm their understanding of, and agreement to the terms and conditions of employment at ILRI. This is a good practice and ensures that all employees, from day one, understand that ILRI has certain policies and behavioural expectations, and takes them seriously. This Code of Conduct provides another opportunity to link with and incorporate elements of the D&I program for new staff, but also for existing staff e.g. through an annual refresher review and sign-off as part of the performance appraisals, or at least when contracts are renewed.

## What are priorities areas for D&I at ILRI?

- *Consolidation of D&I Components into a Cohesive Learning Framework*
- *Staff sensitization of staff on D&I Strategy and Policies*
- *Develop D&I Competencies and Mindset of Managers and Supervisors*

## Consolidation of D&I Components into a Cohesive Learning Framework

The first step will be to develop a D&I framework based on the existing ILRI strategy, policies and related documents. These include (a) Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, (b) ILRI's corporate values of Respect, Responsiveness, Responsibility, (c) ILRI's Workplace discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment policy, (d) Whistle-Blower Policy, and (e) the draft policy on mental health wellbeing. It is understood that the strategy and policy documents are Board-approved and are not intended to be edited as part of this exercise. Instead, we will use the contents of these sources (as well as others such as the CGIAR framework and non-CGIAR examples) to develop a clear and cohesive D&I framework, covering for example:

- **Business Case:** Defining a compelling business case for D&I at ILRI, and the organization's strategy and vision for D&I and the kind of workplace it aspires to be.
- **Policies & practices:** A clear outline of the purpose, procedures and practical guidelines for each of the relevant policies.
- **Implications & Expectations:** Examples and guidelines for behavioural norms in an international working environment, e.g. how to have inclusive meetings, tips for recruitment panels, respectful communication, collaboration, and specific examples of do's and don'ts to avoid inappropriate behaviours in the workplace such as discrimination, bullying, (sexual) harassment.

## Staff sensitization of staff on D&I Strategy and Policies

A second objective for this consultancy, is to sensitize and create functional awareness among all staff around ILRI's D&I strategy and policies. Under normal circumstances, I'd recommend a series of half-day (3.5hrs) workshops (in Nairobi, Addis, and Hanoi) for all staff to provide a clear and consistent understanding of ILRI's D&I strategy, policies and expectations for behavioral conduct in the workplace, regardless of rank or functional area. These would focus on ILRI's business case for D&I, what the specific policies are and what they mean for staff

working at ILRI, and include interactive exercises around unconscious bias and implications for working in a multicultural environment. We'd include specific contents on key cultural norms and need-to-knows when doing business in e.g. Kenya, Ethiopia, Vietnam. However, given the current Covid-19 situation, I am currently reviewing the feasibility and effectiveness of doing such sensitization workshops virtually through an online learning platform.

Whether in person or virtual, I do recommend these sessions to be attended by a mix of staff (senior and junior, science and support services, etc.) as this provides a good opportunity to role model D&I behaviors and learn with and from one another regardless of rank or functional area. However, we will use a different approach for Ethiopia, where P&OD strongly feels that more homogenous groups (by level) will benefit the learning experience.

I believe it will be important to ensure that staff sensitization comprises not merely a one-time transfer of information on D&I, but that we ensure ongoing and active awareness about the policies, procedures, and behavioral standards. ILRI's weekly coffee mornings and town hall meetings provide useful platform, and P&OD already leverages those. I recommend that we extend this messaging to a more day-to-day operational level. For example, flyers /posters in office hallways and meeting rooms with key D&I messages, (b) clear expression of ILRI's corporate values and D&I aspirations on the ILRI website and Intranet, (c) circulate guidelines for how to host inclusive meetings, D&I tips for recruitment panels, and other practical tips to embed D&I in day to day operations. This will require partnering with ILRI's communication division to develop such materials as part of the D&I program development.

## Develop D&I Competencies and Mindset of Managers and Supervisors

ILRI's D&I Strategy emphasizes the linkages between staff diversity, a global institutional culture, high performance and an inclusive environment. This requires active engagement, implementation and role modelling by managers and supervisors in day to day operations. The 2017 staff survey revealed that such behavioral standards are not clearly defined, or at least not effectively practiced by all managers. This was also a dominant theme that emerged during the inception-phase interviews.

As is a common challenge in research organizations, ILRI's supervisors, managers and leaders showcase a diversity in management styles and effectiveness. Some scientists are natural people managers, some are not. Some managers are more inclined and skilled to help people grow and develop than others. Some may be seen as micro-managers others as (too) hands off. Senior research staff at ILRI are widely recognized for their scientific expertise, but the most common concern expressed during the numerous interviews, was about managers' people skills and ability (or interest) to lead diverse teams and create an inclusive and effective work environment. Specifically, the skills that were mentioned most often by interviewees were: listening skills, asking questions instead of merely telling people what to do, giving and receiving feedback, recognizing and appreciating staff contributions and ideas, greater emotional intelligence about diversity of people and workstyles, and more coaching instead of micro-managing. Developing these people skills will be key to operationalizing a D&I culture at ILRI.

To build practical skills and mindset in the above areas, I recommend a two-day, interactive training workshop that effectively combines theory with practice through a mix of learning formats based on best practices from adult education and experiential learning. This hands-on learning experience will also build on the leadership program participants already engaged in,



and particularly the Discovery Insights assessment. We will provide clarity on the role of managers and ILRI's expectations beyond merely science output in terms of behavioral competencies and people leadership skills. For this, it'll be important to integrate the 3Rs as well as the aspirations articulated in the ILRI D&I strategy throughout the training.

Looking at the staff list, I recommend this program for managers in grades 16-21. Assuming a maximum of 30 participants per training, this would likely translate in 5 training workshops. Given the need for more collaboration and interdepartmental interactions, it'll be important to ensure a mix of participants in each of the trainings (i.e. each course would see a mix of senior and mid-level managers, science and business support staff, different Directorates together, and ideally: managers from different regions mixed together with NBO and Addis). During the course, each participant will develop an action plan for implementing a more inclusive management style in their jobs. To sustain the learning and application of these skills, I will offer a webinar session with participants both 3 months and 6 months after the course delivery. During these online sessions, we'll check in with participants, celebrate wins, discuss challenges, and provide additional tips and tools.

**Note:** Some of the key underlying learning objectives for these sessions is to build trust among diverse colleagues and spending time getting to know each other better. I believe this is an important focus of the training since both the 2017 staff survey and my interviews indicated challenges around (a) lack of genuine engagement between managers and staff, (b) silos between research groups, and (c) sometimes disrespectful dynamics between Research and Business Support Services. All of these are closely linked to diversity and inclusion in the workplace. However, due to the Covid-19 situation and travel restrictions, I'm reviewing options for a series of online sessions instead of the two-day face-to-face training. Though this may be necessary from a practical perspective, even with today's advances in technology and bandwidth, it is difficult to get these kinds of interpersonal results in an exclusively virtual training workshop.

## Timeline & Milestones

I believe the way forward is fairly clear in terms of the contents that need to be developed, though the current Covid-19 situation may provide added challenges to the practical roll out. Accepting that the current travel restrictions and full or partial lockdown in many countries, I propose the following as a revised schedule for development and rolling out of a D&I program.

### **April 2021**

Design of a cohesive D&I Framework based on ILRI's D&I strategy and related policies including 3Rs, the Workplace Discrimination, Bullying, and Sexual Harassment Policy, and Whistleblower policy.

### **May 2021**

Develop communication materials (for website, intranet, flyers for offices) that communicate key D&I messages (e.g. 3Rs, D&I vision/business case, clear message of no tolerance of discrimination, bullying, sexual harassment, whistle blower contacts, etc.). In collaboration with ILRI's communication unit.

May to August 2021

Roll out of D&I program and training & sensitization events.

Managers and supervisors' training workshop and materials.

## Recommendations for Additional D&I Support Activities

We will have a full plate the coming months, implementing and designing the D&I program as envisioned. The following are additional activities that I can clearly see would support the implementation and sustainability of the D&I program at ILRI, based on the conversations and exchanges during the inception phase. These would fall outside of the current scope of work and would need to be captured under a separate contract.

### IMC retreat with Leadership Culture Assessment

I (and various of the senior staff) highly recommend a separate session for the IMC in the form of a one-day offsite retreat. For this, I recommend conducting the well-established “[Leadership Culture Survey](#)” (for which I’m a certified administrator). To be completed (online) by staff, the assessment will clearly demonstrate how ILRI staff view the current leadership culture and compares that reality to the optimal culture they want and need. The “gap” between data on the current culture and the desired outcome instantly reveals key opportunities for leadership development, and this would be one of the discussion points of the retreat. Another topic would be IMC’s commitment and opportunities to communicate, support, and role model ILRI’s D&I strategy. We’d also build on the Discovery Insights assessment that IMC members already completed and explore how the IMC can leverage their diversity of styles in their own functioning as a group and as individual leaders of their own.

### Network of D&I Champions

A very effective and important additional step in ILRI’s D&I implementation would be train and capacitate an internal network of D&I Champions. The current D&I Task Force is temporary and too small and not representative enough to effectively carry the D&I torch throughout the organization. Modelled on the former Dignity Workshop that we conducted for CGIAR Centers, this would entail a 2 or 3-days training program for a cross-section of the organization (about 30-40 staff, from different levels, functions, and offices). These individuals would get a more in-depth training about Diversity and Inclusion, unconscious bias, and particularly the policy and guidelines on Bullying, Discrimination and Sexual Harassment. While these D&I Champions would typically not directly intervene in mediation, investigation or resolution processes, they can play a key role in the prevention and escalation of inappropriate behaviour in the workplace by (a) supporting colleagues as a confidential contact point and source of information and support, (b) serving as a sounding board, and (c) providing guidance to

appropriate avenues in line with ILRI's D&I strategy and specific policies. Though the specific terms of reference would need to be defined with P&OD, these D&I Champions at different office locations would engage as an internal network to discuss (e.g. quarterly) and plan activities, events and communications to advance the D&I agenda within and across the organization. A more detailed proposal and quote will be provided upon request.

### Team/Department Workshop: 5 Behaviors of Cohesive Teams

The interviews revealed widespread challenges around effective teamwork, which affect both individual and institutional performance, as well as D&I dynamics. I recommend a two-day team workshops based on the international bestseller "5 Dysfunctions of a Team". It addresses the most common root causes of politics and dysfunctions on teams, AND the keys and tools for overcoming them. This practical training workshop helps team members learn to work together more efficiently and effectively and become a more cohesive team. This is also highly relevant to the D&I program.

During either a one-day or two -days (recommended) workshop, teams do the practical work necessary to (a) build trust and become comfortable asking for help, admitting mistakes and offering feedback, (b) leverage one another's skills and experiences and make better decisions with clarity and buy-in, (c) avoid time wasting talking about the wrong issues or revisiting the same topics over and over again, and align the team around shared objectives and results.

A more detailed proposal and quote can be provided to interested teams/departments.

### Executive Coaching for Senior Managers

The interviews revealed concern about the leadership style and effectiveness of scientists and managers. Tailored executive coaching can be an effective and cost-efficient tool to address behavioral challenges and help technical experts succeed as leaders of people, not mere managers of projects. This is often also a sensible investment from the viewpoint of succession planning. These kinds of coaching partnerships are typically for a minimum of six months and start with a comprehensive 360 feedback assessment using The Leadership Circle to assess current leadership style and effectiveness, and key areas for growth. The focus of the coaching would be on developing interpersonal D&I competencies and effectiveness.